

Emerson Legislative Update—April 2003

THE MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OFFERS 4.874 PERCENT HOME MORTGAGE LOANS

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority is offering 30-year, fixed rate loans to modest-income homebuyers at an interest rate of 4.875 percent, with no discount points charged at loan closing. Homebuyers with household incomes of up to \$56,650 in metropolitan counties and \$44,000 in rural counties may qualify for the 30-year loan to buy new or existing homes. First-time buyers with incomes of 80 percent of the county median, or less, also may qualify for down payment assistance of up to \$10,000 for families with children, and up to \$5,000 for families without children. For more information, homebuyers should call 1-800-327-9158.

U.R.B.A.N. OUTREACH INITIATIVE LAUNCHED

The Senate Democratic Caucus recently announced a new coalition-building outreach program to help increase communication and participation in local and state issues throughout Michigan's metropolitan neighborhoods. The U.R.B.A.N. (United Relationships and Better Advocacy in Neighborhoods) Outreach Initiative is building an information and resource network to help people living in Michigan's urban centers become more active in, and knowledgeable about, political issues that directly affect their lives.

The caucus outreach program is currently holding meetings with neighborhood activists and community, business, and religious leaders across the state to identify local concerns within each city. Meetings have already occurred in Saginaw, Grand Rapids, Benton Harbor, Battle Creek, Flint, Kalamazoo, and Pontiac with additional meetings scheduled in Southfield and Detroit.

SENATE APPROVES FIVE GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENTS

The Senate recently approved more appointments made by Governor Jennifer Granholm, including the nomination of former Senator Mitch Irwin as Director of the Department of Management and Budget. Senators noted that he is working to improve the level of customer service his department provides, while implementing fiscally responsible, cost-cutting measures.

The Senate also supported the nomination of Lynn Jondahl to the State Board of Ethics and approved the nomination of Jim Byrum to the Commission of Agriculture. Ingham County Sheriff Gene Wrigglesworth's nomination to the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards was approved by the Senate, as was James Walter Butler's nomination to the Michigan Broadband Development Authority Board.

NEW STATE WEB SITE CONTAINS INFORMATION ON GAS PRICES

A new state website is now on-line to help inform Michigan motorists about gasoline purchases and to ensure that they pay a fair price at the pump. The website is designed to be a source of information regarding gasoline quality, quantity and pricing in the state. It was developed by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Information Technology, in coordination with the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) and the Michigan Attorney General's office. To search cities and zip codes for average gas prices and a list of gas stations in your area, go to <http://www.mda.state.mi.us/industry/lab/gas/index.html>.